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Consultation Outcome – October Half Term 2026-2027

Dear Parents, Carers and Colleagues,

Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to our consultation on the proposal to introduce a two-week October half term from the 2026-2027 academic year. Although the response rate was low (approximately 1% of recipients), many replies contained helpful and thoughtful points. I want to assure you that I have personally read every single reply and I am extremely grateful for the thought, care, and honesty shown in your feedback.

Whilst we did not ask for a formal vote, there was a near-even split, reflecting both the complexity of the decision and the strength of feeling on both sides. The closeness of the numbers highlights just how carefully this decision has been considered.

There are many benefits to this change that were highlighted in your feedback. For families with children in different schools, aligning our term dates with other local schools will make planning and childcare much more manageable. Many parents and staff noted that the Autumn Term is particularly long and demanding, and a longer break in October will provide a much-needed opportunity for everyone to recharge. Several responses emphasised the positive impact for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), for whom regular breaks and time away from busy school environments can be especially beneficial. Others pointed out practical advantages, such as spreading out the cost and organisation of childcare, reducing illness during the Autumn Term, and supporting staff wellbeing.

At the same time, we have listened carefully to the concerns raised by those who opposed the change. Some families and staff expressed worries about the challenges of extending the summer term into late July, particularly given the potential for hot weather and the impact this could have on comfort and learning conditions in some school buildings. Others highlighted the difficulty of arranging childcare during an extended October break, as this is not a period when many employers expect parents to take leave, and options for holiday clubs or activities can be limited and costly. There were also concerns about the effect on pupils in exam years, especially Year 11, who may lose valuable curriculum time in the Autumn Term. Additionally, some respondents felt that the traditional six-week summer holiday is important for rest, family time, and managing the transition between academic years.

Whilst nothing emerged that had not already been considered, your personal perspectives have been invaluable in helping us understand the real-life impact of this change. I want to thank you for your candour and engagement.

Decision and Next Steps

After careful consideration, and in light of the direction taken by the majority of local and feeder schools, we will be moving ahead with the change to a two-week October half term from 2026-2027. However, we are committed to reviewing this arrangement annually and remain prepared to make further changes if needed.

Addressing Your Queries

- **No Loss of Learning Time:** Please be assured that children will be in school for exactly the same number of days as before. This is not an additional holiday, but a rebalancing of the academic calendar.
- **INSET Days:** Schools will be considering the most helpful placement of INSET days, including the possibility of using the end of the summer term. We are also actively considering the use of twilight (evening) sessions for staff training, which would allow us to retain more of the summer break for both pupils and staff, and help protect valuable learning time for Year 11 pupils. Our aim is to minimise disruption and ensure that all students, especially those in key exam years, are fully supported.
- **Environmental Conditions:** We recognise concerns about the comfort of pupils and staff during the warmer weeks at the end of the Summer Term. We are continually updating and improving our school environments, including the installation of air conditioning and other adaptations where possible, whilst remaining mindful of energy use and our environmental responsibilities.
- **Childcare and Holiday Clubs:** We understand that arranging childcare during the October half term can be challenging. As we do for other school holidays, we will continue to signpost parents and carers to local holiday clubs and childcare provision for the October break.
- **Why Not Extend Other Holidays?** Some respondents suggested extending other breaks instead. The main reason for this change is to align our term dates with other local schools, which will help families with children in different settings and support staff planning. Extending other holidays would not achieve this alignment, so we will not be pursuing that option at this time.
- **Support for All:** We recognise that changes to term dates can have different effects on different families and staff. We will work closely with our schools to provide clear guidance and support, particularly for part-time and support staff, and to ensure that the needs of all members of our community are considered.

Once again, thank you for your engagement and for sharing your views so openly. Your feedback has been instrumental in shaping our decision and we will continue to listen and adapt as needed.

With warmest regards,



Susan Wardlow - Chief Executive Officer

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